Nature*Kenya*, The EANHS, *Action for Biodiversity Conservation*

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Newsletter

Celebrating 90 Years

MAY, 1999

Membership

826

Members
(At time of print)

THERE IS STRENGTH IN NUMBERS - INTRODUCE YOUR SOCIETY TO FRIENDS!

ACTIVITIES

THE EANHS
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
MONDAY 10 MAY
5:30 p.m. at the Louis Leakey M. Hall
National Museums of Kenya

Also featuring a video: Living dangerously - 'The Warthog and the Teabag'. The odventures of o female warthog on the Hessels' farm between Mount Kenya and the Aberdare. Narrated by Richard Briers.

Wednesday Morning Birdwalks:

Bird watching walks at sites in and around Nairobi. Meet at the National Museum car park every Wednesday at 8:45 am. Return about 12:30 p.m.

Those who are not members of Nature Kenya or Kenya Museum Society can get temporary membership at Kshs 100 per birdwalk. Payable on arrival at the car park.

The Big Sit In!
Sunday 16 May

Unlike the usual bird 'walk' or Pot Luck this should be an attractive change and challenge.

A Big Sit is a team effort in which the objective is to identify as many birds species that can be seen or heard within 12 hours. The difference lies in the limitation of the area from which you will be allowed to observe.

Participants must follow the following rules:

1. Area. Birds recorded may be either seen or heard but all counting must be conducted within a circle with a diameter of no more than 17 ft/ 5.2 m whose centre is a single designated point.
2. Time. a. All counting must be within a single 12-hour period. b. A time-out must be designated when not all team members are in the defined circle. c. Teams do not have to birdwatch for the full 12 hours but specify what time you began and ended.
3. Teams. A team may be composed of two or more members.
4. Conduct. Each team member must make every reasonable effort to identify personally and to help other team members to identify every species counted by the team.
5. The Results. Send your results including the species, the site and team members to the Nature Kenyo office to arrive by the end of May. Any species needing a rarities description must be supported accordingly. Checklists are available from the office.

Suggestions for suitable sites are welcome. A mixture of wetland, forest and open ground is a good combination. A good all-around view will increase your chances. Look up on birds that may be in your chosen area. Participants will meet at the National Museum car park on Sunday 16 May at 7:00 a.m. for registration, so come with your suggestions and form a team.

Remember to pack your lunch, fill your thermos and good luck. The team with the most species will be crowned *Big Sit Champions*.

Our grateful acknowledgement goes to the Boo Mathews/ Bedfordshire Bird Club who gave us the idea and will also be birdwatching on a Big Sit on the same day, in England.

SUBCOMMITTEES

FRIENDS OF THE NAIROBI ARBORETUM:

Forest Gump on Saturday 8 May Games by selected schools in the Arboretum. Prizes to be won by the most eco-aware students.

Arboretum guided Tree Walks on the last Monday of every month i.e. 31 May from 9:30 a.m. Meet at the new FONA offices beside the Girl Guides HQ.

World Environment Day June 5

Ecological festival to mark this day at the Arboretum. Organised by FONA, Uvumbuzi Club and UNEP.

SUCCULENTA:

Saturday 29 to Tuesday 1 June
Trip to Cottar's Kimana Camp

An opportunity to visit Loitokitok and perhaps the Chuyulu Hills. Accommodation is available for 5 doubles at Ksh 1500/- per person per night and Ksh 500/- per person per night for those bringing their own sleeping bags, tents and nets. Bring your own food and drinks.

Contact Maria Dodds on tel: 882828 or Dee Roberts on 891338 to book accommodation and liaise on food and transport details.

Succulenta Annual General Meeting

Saturday 26 June at the Roberts' House, Langata, 2:30 p.m.

ARABUKO SOKOKE (COAST)

FOREST WALKS-Wednesday 26 May. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Gede Forest Station.
BIRD WALKS-Saturday 1 May. Starting at 6:30 a.m. from the Gede Forest Station. Organised by Arabuko Sokoke Forest Guides Association.

EXCURSIONS

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK
CAMPING IN NGURUMAN

Saturday 29 May to Tuesday 1 June
Organised with John Kirk

Tentative programme of main activities

Sat 29 Depart at 9:00 a.m. to Olkirimatian - about 120 kms. Set up camp at site adjacent to the Uaso Nyiro river. Afternoon birdwalk along the river or tracking with Maasai guides. After dinner a night game drive.

Sun 30 Climb up to the Nguruman Escarpment, an ascent of about 3 hrs. This is an all day activity and hard work but you are rewarded with breathtaking scenery and a swim in the river on the top. *John warns parents that this may be an extreme venture for children.*
Local birdwatching an alternative. After dinner, entertainment by our Maasai hosts.

Mon 1 Drive to see Lake Natron, a distance of about 50 kms, perhaps visiting northern swamp and hot springs near Magadi.

Tue 2 Break camp to leave by 10 a.m.

Cost per person:
3800/- if you need a tent to be provided for you or
3300/- if you have your own tent.
This cost includes food, camping fees and guides.
Same rate applies to children.
Minivan cost per person:
2000/-

Minimum 10 persons
Maximum 24 persons including children
Booking deadline: Monday 10 May.
Payment must be made on booking or else it is not confirmed and booking will be given to next paying member.
Members participate at their own risk and Nature Kenya takes no responsibility for loss or injury.

Ranch entrance fee to be paid direct on arrival - anticipated at 200/- per person per day. Check with the office closer to the date on fees charged for the vehicle.

NOTES:
Lunch on the 29th is not included - bring a packed lunch. Meals will consist of a big breakfast and dinner and a very light lunch (if you think you need more for lunch bring your own snacks).

Carry:
- 4, 1 litre water bottles which can be carried during the day. Drinking water will be available for refilling but it will help if you can bring as much of your own as you can.
- Knife, fork, spoons, cup, plate, mug
- Sleeping bag
- Spot light, if possible, for the night game drive.

Fuel is available in Magadi Town.

Remember camp conditions will be basic. Bring whatever you feel will be necessary for yourself i.e. mattress, basin, camp chair.

Take precautions against malaria.

Departure: 9:00 a.m. promptly from the National Museum car park, ARRIVE AT 8:30 A.M. FOR BRIEFING.

MAY DIARY

Wed 5 Birdwalk

Sat 8 Forest Gump at Arboretum

Wed 12 & 19 Birdwalk

Sun 16 Bit Bird Sit In

Wed 26 Arabuko Sokoke walk & Nairobi Birdwalk

Sat 29 - 2 June Trips to Kimana and Nguruman

Mon 31 Tree Walk

October 2 - 3 WORLD BIRDWATCH

AAR

AAR SUPPORTS THE EAST AFRICA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

MUSEUMS AND MUSEUM SITES

Olorgesailie

Lorna Abungu, Coordinator,
Regional Centre of Archaeology

This Acheulian culture site is located about 90 kilometres south-west of Nairobi on the road to Magadi. The drive is beautiful and panoramic leading up to the shoulder of the Ngong Hills and descending onto the floor of the Rift Valley. The site of Olorgesailie, donated to the Kenyan Government by the Maasai community, covers an area of 52 acres. First discovered by Mary Leakey in 1942, this site was excavated continuously between 1942 and 1947. The area continues to be under investigation to this date, with a team from the Smithsonian Institution, USA, making annual surveys and excavations. Olorgesailie is the largest of the National Museums' prehistoric sites, and is characterised by *in situ* displays of prehistoric materials, including numerous hand axes and fossilised skeletons of extinct species of elephant and a hippopotamus.

The small but excellent site museum at Olorgesailie was recently renovated, and holds exhibits on human evolution, stone tools, and site formation. A raised boardwalk has been built around an impressive *in situ* display of stone tools and animal fossils, all dating from 1.2 million years ago. Also at the site is a large picnic shade and four camping cottages, which can be booked through NMK headquarters in Nairobi.

NEWSLETTER TITLE

Thank you for all your entries. We now close the competition and begin the search for that winning name!

OFFICE HOURS:Monday to Friday
9:00am to 3:00pm
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FAX:(02) 74 10 49

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Birds of Kenya and Northern Tanzania

LEAD-COLOURED FLYCATCHER

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Uncommon in riverine and acacia woods, seen by Fleur Ng'weno, Willis Okech, Shailesh Patel and Jeremy High MARICH PASS FIELD STUDIES CENTRE/ MAR

Tufted Duck, Willis Okech, LERAI CAMP/

Red-and-Yellow Barbet, Red-Fronted Barbet, Wed. Morning Birdwalk, PROPOSED BIODIVERSITY PARK/ MAR

Levaillant's Cuckoo, Bateleur, Chris Hill & Helen Barbera, NAIROBI N. PARK/ FEB

60 - 80 Lesser Kestrels, Chris Hill, OL'MOROGI RANCH (NAIVASHA) /MAR

Black-billed Weaver, Bernard Chege, SUBUKIA FOREST (NAKURU)/ MAR

Over 100 Grey Crowned Cranes in ploughed field, Narinder Heyer, ZIWA/ Apr

White-Crested Turaco, Black Cuckoo, African Scops Owl, Broad-billed Roller, Olivaceous Warbler, Black-headed Gonolek, birdwatchers on trip to MARICH PASS/ MAR

Since AUGUST '98 on NANDI ROAD, KAREN, John Dawson reports the 100th species seen in (or from!) his garden. Includes a pale phase Booted Eagle and a flock of about 10 Lesser Kestrel, Green Sandpiper and Red-throated Pipit, Lesser Honeyguide, White-starred Robin, Dark-capped Yellow Warbler, Sulphur-breasted Bush-shrike, Thick-billed Seedeater, and Brown-backed Woodpecker. The 100th species? A Little Sparrowhawk!

Please send unusual sightings to 'Kenya Birds' where if accepted they are published with full reference.

SOCIETY NOTICES

PALMS OF THE AMAZON:
A Botanical Tour
Leader: Dr. Andrew Henderson

Explore the main Amazon river downstream from Manaus.
Along the river, and in nearby forests, are a variety of species of *Astrocaryum, Attalea, Bactris, Desmoncus, Euterpe, Geonoma, Hyospathe, Iriartella, Mauritia.* Also animals including howler monkeys, dolphins, caiman, piranha and sloths.

Planned for August 1-12th 1999. Write to Institute of Systematic Botany, The New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY 10458, USA.

BUSH CRAFT: *Weather and Clouds* from *The Wilderness Guardian*

Cumulonimbus: the signpost for turbulent bumpy air. Thunder, lightning, snow high up, hail and heavy rain lower.
Altocumulus: if in front of cumulus clouds, thundery weather coming.
Stratocumulus: follows the day's cumulus clouds. A clear night ahead over land.
Cirrus: feathery cirrus means fine weather. Mare's tail and a halo around the sun means storms and rain soon.
Stratus and nimbostratus: drizzle and persistant rain.
Cumulus: fair weather.
Cirrostratus: rainy weather likely, especially if altostratus appears.
Cirrocumulus: rainy weather is probable, esp. if they turn to cirrostratus.